

2010

Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan



City of Franklin
Venango County, PA
1/1/2010

Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan
City of Franklin - Venango County, PA

2010 – 2015

Adopted by City Council
— —, 2010

Douglas Baker, Mayor
City Council

Bicycle Friendly Advisory Committee
City Council

Community Development
Franklin City Police Department
Allegheny Valley Trails Association
Franklin Chamber of Commerce
Franklin YMCA
Franklin School District
PA Department of Transportation
University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC Northwest)
Safe Kids Coalition

With assistance from:

Allegheny Valley Trails Association
David Lange, National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program
Council on Greenways and Trails

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Executive Summary



Figure 2 Major trailhead is the gateway for bikers to the city.



Figure 1 The Saltbox Visitors Center welcomes trail users.

I. INTRODUCTION

As in most American communities, the automobile dominates transportation in the City of Franklin and throughout the region. Being a rural community cars are a necessity. But often, the accommodation of cars in our public and private spaces creates obstacles to safe, efficient, and pleasurable walking and biking. Human-powered travel – whether by foot, bicycle, wheelchair or stroller – can be beneficial individually and for the community by increasing health and recreation, decreasing congestion, improving safety and character of the city and providing economic growth. It is in the best interest of our community to accommodate and promote this type of travel, not only as a practical necessity but also in order to enjoy the important economic, environmental, and social benefits that come from increased bicycle and pedestrian activity.



Purpose

The aim of the Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan is to increase and encourage opportunities for bicycling and walking in the city and improve and ensure safety. Increasing use and safety requires an integrated approach involving facility development, public education, enforcement, promotional campaigns and supportive public policy. This plan will lay the groundwork and provide the guidance for City officials, regional agencies and the community at large to accomplish these goals.

Vision, Goals and Objectives

Plan development

II. CURRENT CONDITIONS

Existing Policies and Plans (city, county, regional)

New Policies and Ordinances

Review of Relevant Legislation

IV. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

A. Engineering

B. Education

Education and awareness are perhaps the most critical components of a bicycle friendly community. By educating people of all ages about the safety concerns, benefits, and risks associated with motorists and cyclists sharing the road, we are ensuring the safety of our community. By raising awareness of all aspects of being a Bicycle Friendly Community, the potential of the benefits to be attained by the community will become obvious.

Although safety is important, it's not the only factor about which cyclists and motorists need to be educated. Bicycles are legally considered vehicles and those who ride bikes, along with those who drive motor vehicles, must understand the traffic laws and how they apply to both modes of transportation. This includes knowing how to communicate with one another and respond as though each driver were operating a motor vehicle.

It's essential, however, to focus on the benefits of a bicycle friendly community, such as the exercise and health benefits that are associated with riding – whether it be for transportation or recreational purposes. Of course, other benefits arise from bicycle friendly communities that are important to the community as a whole, such as a safer pedestrian friendly design with less congestion and economic growth attributed to attracting users from the nearby trail system into town and environmental sustainability that is frequently compromised by motor-vehicle use. By addressing the benefits the residents will receive with posters, fliers, newspapers, public service announcements and website sections, they will understand the importance of being a Bicycle Friendly Community.

Many steps have already been taken in the effort to educate both children and adults about riding bicycles in Franklin and the surrounding communities. In the spring of 2008, six local residents received certification from the League of American Bicyclists and quickly partnered with



Figure 3 Volunteers assemble bikes to be given to kids completing the program.

PENNDOT on a Safe Bicycling program in two neighboring elementary schools that was first implemented at the end of the 2008 school year. In addition, a one week League's Kids course was provided in June 2008 by two of the certified instructors in conjunction with the Franklin YMCA. A "Road I" class is in the works for the instructors, as well. This will give them the opportunity to educate both children and adults about bicycle safety, bicycle maintenance, traffic laws, how to properly ride and care for their bikes and, overall, enjoying the freedom and pleasure that comes with riding a bike.

Future educational programs and classes will be developed for children, adults, and seniors as an ongoing effort to ensure knowledge, skill and understanding are recognized and utilized on the road and on the trails. For example, bicycle driving classes can be offered by the certified instructors on a regular basis and after school bike clubs can be implemented so that children can both learn about and experience the skills that are necessary in a bicycle friendly community.

Local enforcement agencies and municipalities also need to be trained and educated, or at least reinforced, about the rules of the road that apply to bicycles and the fact that bicycles belong on them. A positive influence from authority figures in the public eye will make people aware of the proper procedures of sharing the road and it will encourage them to become more informed through the educational programs and events that are offered by the communities' League Certified Instructors.

Public events, similar to Pittsburgh's Bike Fest, are important tools in raising awareness and encouraging a great number of people to support bicycle transportation on the road. These public events can be educational in nature, as well. Cycling maps containing recommended routes and facilities, roadway conditions, and additional information (including reminders of bicycle safety) can be given to participants for reference purposes.



Figure 4 Rest during a bike sojourn.

Education and awareness go hand-in-hand. In order to educate children and adults about the safety, benefits, and risks of cycling, plus the economic and social benefits to the community, we must first make them aware of the potential that lies ahead. Likewise, through educational programs we can continue to encourage citizens to support non-motorized vehicles as a viable means of transportation. This includes marketing to those who know very little about the rules of the road as they apply to bicycles and sharing the road. It's important to make them aware that traffic laws are the same for bicycles as they are for any motorized vehicle. Lecturing about traffic laws might not be enough. We need to consistently remind motorists, cyclists and pedestrians while they are on the road through signage. We must also reach out to local businesses and other organizations to help them recognize the potential patronage that exists with the passersby of a different pace.

Implementation: Education and Awareness

In order to be effective in this endeavor, we must create a brand for ourselves. Three components will assist us in establishing this objective: I. Elements, II. Stakeholders, and III. Strategies.

The elements will include the message(s) we use to identify the primary goal of becoming a Bicycle Friendly Community.

I. Elements

➤ Message

- Vision: The City of Franklin and the Allegheny Valley Trails Association encourage individuals to engage in healthy outdoor activities and they will strive to administer and uphold a bicycle friendly community in the City of Franklin so that participants may enjoy an alternative means of transportation that is not only good for physical, recreational and health reasons but for economic and ecological reasons as well.
- “Products” and Services
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
- Competitive differentiators – why Franklin is better to visit than other areas
 - _____
 - _____
- Revenue objectives
 - _____ Local businesses increase revenue by X% _____
 - _____ # trail users patronizing businesses _____
- Marketing elements:
 - Brand
 - Logo, slogan or catch phrase
 - _____
 - _____
 - Signage design

II. Stakeholders

- Residents
- Visitors
- Local and regional officials: _____
- Partnering entities: _____
- Donors: _____
- Regulators
- Grant Funding
 - Private: _____
 - Government: _____

The attributes will involve the systems and processes that will help to implement the program, such as the training courses that will be offered.

III. Strategies

- Programs:
 - Advertising and Marketing
 - Locally: _____
 - Regionally – tourist promotion, _____
 - Economic venues: _____
 - Walk to work/school
 - Programs in schools
 - _____

- Bicycle Driving Classes _____
 - Law enforcement agency training _____
 - Community rides and promotional events
 - Bike tours/evening rides
 - Pet days
 - Themed walks/rides on the bike trail for holidays
 - Halloween – haunted walk
 - 4th of July – ride for freedom
 - Labor Day picnic/bike ride
- Processes:
 - Develop a Bike/Pedestrian Coordinator relationship with school officials and business representative
 - Develop Bike/Pedestrian component into city events and festivals
 - Signage and road markings
 - Informational displays and maps at trailheads and key city locations
- Platforms:
 - Additions to websites: _____
 - Printed media: _____
 - Radio/television: _____
 - Blogs and reviews
 - Notifications of progress and up and coming projects
 - Brochures

Finally, the indicators will offer evidence of the success of the programs.

Indicators

- Business sales/volume
- Increased inquiries for city information and reputation as a Bicycle Friendly Community
- Number of people riding bikes as opposed to driving motorized vehicles
- Number of people obeying the rules of the road and safety procedures
 - Wearing helmets, signaling, going with the flow of traffic, etc...